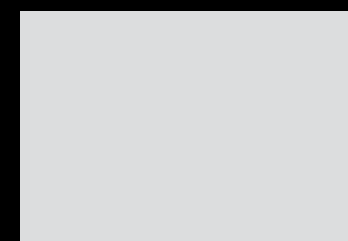
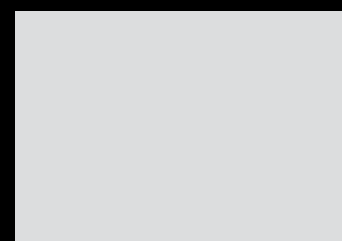




Peter, do we have any more similar photos for these three blocks?



# UNTOLD STORIES



"African American CCC enrollees at attention" (location uncertain)

**The Cherokee, African Americans, Italians and Spaniards...they are all part of the Parkway story.**

## THE BLENDING OF CULTURES IN THE BLUE RIDGE

The history of Appalachia has often been over-simplified. Even the earliest visitors who wrote about the region in the late nineteenth century described the culture in stereotypical fashion. To many of these observers, all southern mountain residents fit into a common mold, looking, thinking, and acting in a certain way. Appalachia was portrayed with very little racial diversity or ethnicity – an almost entirely white, Anglo-Saxon environment. Americans read these stories, bought into these images, and began the regional stereotypes that hindered our understanding of Appalachia for generations. But there is increasing evidence of minority populations and the resulting cultural blending that took place in many areas of the mountains. Research reveals a number of traditional African American

communities along the Parkway's route. And we now realize that the Cherokee nation once reached from Floyd, VA to Cherokee, NC along what is now the Parkway. The most wide-spread cultural exchange took place with the original inhabitants of the region. As European settlers moved into the land of the Cherokee, tragic conflicts occurred in many places, but cultural exchange between American Indians and new settlers was sometimes common. Many elements of skills and crafts thought of as "typically" Appalachian are actually a result of cultural exchange. Herbal lore and the understanding of medicinal uses of native plants, some forms of basket making, and even Appalachian group dancing may reflect Cherokee influence.

A study of folk culture along the Blue Ridge Parkway found African American communities and strong church congregations with black mountain families having roots back to the days of slavery. African American and slave cemeteries are documented in a number of locations on or near the Parkway. At the Peaks of Otter in Virginia, an African American family farmed mountain slopes from 1905 – 1942 when their land was bought for the construction of the Parkway. The Hotel Mons at the Peaks of Otter, typical of other nineteenth century mountain resort hotels, used slave labor or employed African Americans to cater to hotel guests. The story of Parkway construction itself also includes the fascinating role of minority and immigrant populations and their important contributions to park history. When Nello Teer of Durham, North Carolina secured the first contract for building a section of the Parkway in 1935, he brought Italian and Spanish stone masons to the job. As the size and scope of this new parkway project became clear, these craftsmen encouraged friends and relatives with similar skills to come and work here. A landscape architect present at the first day of Parkway construction, recalled that these stonemasons worked rock in ways unknown to others. "You could look at their hands and it seemed as if they were born to lay rock," he marveled. For decades, names like Troitino and Vecellio were part of the Parkway story and some of their descendants still operate construction companies in the region.

Part of the benefit of building the Parkway was providing jobs for an economically troubled country. Camps of Civilian Conservation Corps workers were scattered throughout the region, landscaping and building picnic areas and campgrounds. A 1934 policy established segregated camps, allowing black enrollees to work within their own state of origin. One such camp, NP-29 near Galax, Virginia was considered "something in the nature of an experiment" in southwestern Virginia due to the "hostility" of some local residents. Camp records from 1941 indicate that landscaping along the Parkway was the primary task of NP-29 and that the educational and recreational opportunities for enrollees were the same as in other camps. You can still see the CCC boys' work in Parkway picnic areas and campgrounds. In the 1930s, Federal policies mandated racially segregated facilities in national park units. At Pine Spur, milepost 143, separate cabins, camping, and picnicking areas were planned. Construction of the area was halted during WW II. Following the war, Park Service segregation policies were rescinded so construction was never completed at Pine Spur. Racially and ethnically varied communities have been part of the regional legacy all along; but often overlooked or minimized. Today, as we find young African Americans embracing mountain string band music, or we encounter wonderfully authentic Italian recipes in mountain communities handed down from early stone masons, we are reminded and encouraged to seek out the cultural diversity that is part of the Blue Ridge legacy.







While most visitors travel the Parkway in an automobile, ever increasing numbers visit the park on two-wheels, via bicycle or motorcycle. Remember, spectacular views are best enjoyed at one of the Parkway’s many overlooks.

Be aware of rapidly changing road character and environmental conditions, particularly when the roadway curves and descends at the same time. Please enjoy the views, but watch the curves.



# General Driving Safety

*Because of its unique design, the Parkway drive is different than most and this can mean taking some extra care to ensure a safe visit. “Enjoy the view, but watch the road!” is our way of reminding visitors to pay extra attention along the Parkway. A few specific pointers and facts may help even more.*

## Watch out for...

- STEEP GRADES** – In some places, the Parkway has steeper grades than normally found on highways. Without paying close attention, your speed can increase far more than you expect.
- UNFORGIVING ROAD SHOULDERS** – The Parkway’s road shoulders are narrow in places so that the meadows or forest edges grow close to the pavement. This is, of course, part of the beauty of the drive, but may require some extra attention.
- BUILT-IN DISTRACTIONS** – Wildlife, wildflowers, bicyclists, and extraordinary views... all of these contribute to the Parkway experience and every traveler should be aware of these while enjoying the drive.
- LIMITED SIGHT DISTANCES** – There aren’t many straight lines in the natural world and the Parkway was designed with gentle curves and not many straight sections. This is part of what makes the road seem to lie gently on the land and it also requires some extra attention while driving.
- SPEED CHANGES** – The Parkway speed limit is mostly 45 mph, but occasionally you will find yourself in developed areas where the driving speed drops to 25 mph.
- SPIRAL CURVES** - Some of the tight curves do not have a consistent radius so extra care needs to be taken, especially on motorcycles.

## Other Important Safety Advice

- Hiking shoes or boots are recommended for most trails, especially the more strenuous ones. Steep and rocky areas and slippery stream crossings require extra attention and careful footing. Even for trails marked “easy,” it is advisable to wear flat or rubber-soled shoes for comfort and good traction. Wearing sandals, “flip-flops,” or high heels can result in accidents.
- Lock valuables in the trunk of your car or take them with you.
- Sudden changes in weather are common in these mountains. Even in mild seasons, rapid dips in temperature and unexpected thunderstorms frequently occur, and at higher elevations the wind and temperature can carry a surprising chill. Be prepared for weather changes by bringing along suitable clothing.
- Do not drink the water from streams or springs.



## Lodging & Dining

Lodges are located on the Parkway at **Peaks of Otter** (MP 86) , **Doughton Park** (MP 241.1), and **Mt. Pisgah** (MP 408), with housekeeping cabins available at **Rocky Knob** (MP 175).



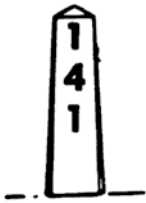
*Pisgah Inn • Treetops*

Restaurants, other facilities and services are available at a number of other locations, opening in mid- or late April. See chart on page 7 for details.

*Check [nps.gov/blri](http://nps.gov/blri) for availability of food and lodging during the 2011 season.*

## Special Information: MILEPOSTS:

Along the Parkway, you will see numbered mileposts. The zero milepost marker is at Rockfish Gap immediately south of Shenandoah National Park. Each mile is numbered progressively southward on the Parkway to its southernmost entrance at Cherokee.



## Our Symbol

The National Park Service arrowhead was authorized as the agency’s official emblem by the Secretary of the Interior on July 20, 1951. Created in 1949 by Aubrey V. Neasham, a Park Service historian, the insignia was intended to represent several aspects of the mission of the National Park Service: Its shape and earth-brown background embody our nation’s cultural heritage exemplified in the parks by archaeology and history. The bison and the sequoia tree (symbols from the first two national parks--Yellowstone and Sequoia) represent the diverse natural world of plants and animals included within the system. The snowcapped mountain and glacier portrayed on the insignia’s horizon and the white of the water in its right foreground signify the all-important values of scenery and recreation. The symbol first appeared on a park road sign, then a ranger uniform in September 1952. The icon was registered as an official emblem of the Park Service on February 9, 1965, by the United States Patent Office.



# Regulations By Recreational Activity

*To help protect and preserve the Blue Ridge Parkway, yourself, and others, observe all park regulations. Be alert for uncontrolled fire, safety hazards, accidents and emergencies. Please report such conditions by calling **1-800-PARKWATCH (1-800-727-5928)**.*

- ROADSIDE PARKING** - Parking is allowed on road shoulders, but please avoid wet areas and make sure that all four wheels are off the pavement.
- TRAILS** - Trails are for hiking only. Bicycles and motorized vehicles are not permitted.
- CAMPING** - Camping is permitted only in park campgrounds or designated back-country sites. See Camping information, page 8.
- PETS** - All pets must be on a leash or under physical restraint at all times while in the park. The territorial instinct of dogs can lead to fights with other dogs on the trail. Dogs also frighten hikers and chase wildlife. If a pet cannot be kept under control, it should be left at home.
- LAKES AND PONDS** - These are for fishing and scenic beauty only, with no swimming allowed. Nearby U.S. Forest Service recreation areas, state parks, and mountain resorts often have swimming facilities.
- PREVENT FOREST FIRES** - Fires are permitted in the provided grills or fire pits in campgrounds and picnic areas only.
- BOATS** – Only on Price Lake, boats without motors or sails are permitted.
- LITTER** - Deposit all litter in the trash cans provided.
- ALL NATURAL RESOURCES ARE PROTECTED** - Leave wildflowers and other vegetation in their natural condition for others to enjoy. Do not disturb animal or plant life in any way. Hunting and trapping are prohibited. Do not interfere with animals by feeding, touching, or frightening them. Do not cut, deface, or damage trees.
- ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES** - Possession of open containers of alcohol in vehicles is prohibited. Alcohol is permitted in campgrounds by registered campers and in picnic areas until 9:00 PM.

## Accessibility:

Most Parkway facilities are wheelchair usable. Some facilities have minor slope and/or structural barriers. For more information about access, please contact The Blue Ridge Parkway Headquarters, 199 Hemphill Knob Road, Asheville, NC 28803. Phone: **(828) 271-4779**.

# Places to Pause along the Parkway...

Check [nps.gov/blri](http://nps.gov/blri) for availability of food and lodging during the 2011 season.

	Milepost	Visitor Center	Camping	Exhibits	Programs	Restrooms	Picnic Areas
Humpback Rocks	5.8	H		H	HP	H	X
Otter Creek**	60.9		H		H	HP	
James River	63.8	HP		H		HP	X
Peaks of Otter*	86	H	H	H	H	H	HP
Explore Park VC	115	H		H		H	
Roanoke Mountain	120.4		H		H	HP	
Smart View	154.5					HP	H
Rocky Knob^	169	H	H		HP	HP	H
Mabry Mill **	176.1			HP	HP	HP	
Groundhog Mountain	189					HP	H
Blue Ridge Music Cntr	213	H		H	H	H	
Cumberland Knob	217.5					H	H
Doughton Park*	241.1		H	HP	HP	HP	HP
NW Trading Post	258.6					H	
Jeffress Park	272					HP	H
Cone Park	294.1	H		H	H	H	
Price Park	297.1		H		H	HP	H
Linn Cove Viaduct	304.4	H		H		H	
Linville Falls	316.4	H	H	H	X	H	H
Minerals Museum	331	H		H	H	H	
Crabtree Falls **	339.5		H		HP	H	H
Craggy Gardens	364.6	H		H		HPA	H
Folk Art Center	382	H		H	H	H	H
Parkway Visitor Ctr.	384	H		H	H	H	H
Mt Pisgah*	408.6		H		HP	H	HP
Waterrock Knob	451.2	H		H	H	H	

H – Wheelchair Accessible. HP – Accessible with Assistance. X – Not Handicapped Accessible. HPA – Located in Picnic Area. \*- Lodging and Dining Available. \*\* Dining Available. ^ Lodging Available.





## Camping

Of the Parkway's nine campgrounds, most have at least some sites that will accommodate sizeable recreational vehicles, and all offer restrooms, drinking water, picnic tables and grills. The settings are tranquil and scenic, and most offer ready access to miles of hiking trails for those who want to explore on foot. **Be sure to ask about Ranger talks and campfire programs that are given most weekends and occasionally during the week.** Most campgrounds are at elevations of more than 2,500 feet, which means that temperatures are usually cooler than in the surrounding area. Even in summer a sweater can come in handy.

Campgrounds are open early May through October, with a per night charge of \$16. Reservations may be made for some sites at the Peaks of Otter, Rocky Knob, Price Park, Linville Falls and Mt. Pisgah campgrounds. All other campgrounds and sites are "first come, first served." To make a reservation, visit [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov) on the Internet or call toll-free (877) 444-6777. Reserved sites are \$19 per night. As a general rule, demand is higher on weekends and holidays.

Group camping is available only at **Linville Falls Campground**. Call (828) 765-6082 for more information. In addition, limited backcountry camping is available via permit at **Basin Cove in Doughton Park** (336-372-8568) and **Rock Castle Gorge** (540-745-9661).

Camping outside of designated campgrounds or without a permit at backcountry sitest is prohibited.



## Fishing

The Parkway lies along the headwaters of many regional watersheds. Thirteen lakes were constructed for aesthetic beauty and recreational opportunities. Streams, ponds, and rivers give anglers ample opportunity to test their skills for trout, bass, and panfish. A state license from either North Carolina or Virginia is valid for fishing in all park waters. Creel limits and other regulations vary and are posted at streamside. Remember that swimming is not allowed in park waters.



## Bicycling

In North Carolina, helmets are required for all bicyclists under sixteen years of age. In Virginia, the regulations vary by county. Helmets are a highly recommended safety item when bicycling the Blue Ridge Parkway. High visibility clothing is recommended. Be sure to ride single file, well to the right-hand side of the road and obey the same traffic rules that apply to motor vehicles. Bicycles are not permitted on trails or walkways. Plan ahead, and be sure to take into consideration elevation changes that will require more time and, of course, more exertion.

## Be A Good Guest In Bear Country!

Seeing bears can be the highlight of any visit to a national park. However, while visitors to the Parkway come and go, bears and other wildlife live here. Your actions can have a lasting impact on the behavior and health of these magnificent animals. Bears quickly lose their natural fear of people if fed human food, so do not feed them, crowd them or observe them too closely. Store all food, coolers, utensils or anything that may smell like food in locked vehicles. Place litter in garbage cans as soon as possible.

## Restrooms

Restrooms are available at visitor centers, picnic areas and restaurants along the Parkway.

## Ranger-led Programs



Rangers and park volunteers share their knowledge of the Parkway by presenting a variety of interpretive programs from June through October. Campfire talks, guided hikes, historic craft demonstrations, music,

and nature study are some of the activities you and your family can enjoy. The subject matter varies from one place to another and also may change from week to week. Schedules are posted at visitor centers, campgrounds, restaurants, and lodges and at [www.nps.gov/blri](http://www.nps.gov/blri).

## Junior Ranger Programs

A Junior Ranger is someone like you who cares for and learns about America's national parks so that others in the future may enjoy them! Ask for a handbook at any visitor center and begin your journey to becoming a Parkway Junior Ranger. Any child can complete activities in the handbook, learn more about this National Park, what makes it special, and earn their own certificate and a Junior Ranger badge. Begin today!



## Parks As Classrooms

Blue Ridge Parkway staff offers programs for students in their classrooms during the school year. The aim is to connect students with the natural world and the region's cultural heritage in ways that are real and meaningful, while meeting state curriculum standards.

In the spring and fall, Rangers offer programs at many locations along the Parkway. Teachers should contact the closest Parkway office from the list provided in the **"FOR TEACHERS"** section of [www.nps.gov/blri](http://www.nps.gov/blri) as soon as possible to schedule field trips. Keep in mind that space is limited and programs are filled on a first come, first served basis. We know that our best hope for the future lies in educating today's children!



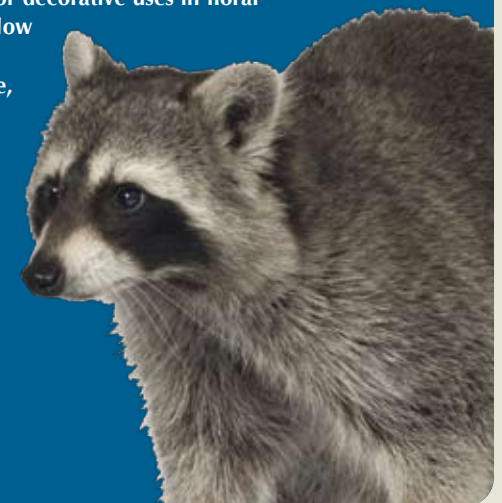
## PARKWATCH: 1-800-PARKWATCH (727-5928)

The Parkwatch program encourages visitors and park neighbors to actively protect and preserve this special place. Please be alert and report any uncontrolled fires, emergencies, accidents, safety hazards, vandalism, or crime to a park employee. For general Parkway information, call (828) 298 0398.



## "MAKING A DIFFERENCE" A RESPONSIBLE VISIT

- The best diet for all animals is a natural one. Human food can make any wild animal sick. The digestive system of a white tail deer, common around campgrounds and picnic areas, only breaks down the natural food sources including twigs, bark, leaves, grasses and acorns. Wild animals like the taste of human food, but for their safety and health, do not feed them.
- The Parkway has unique habitats that support rare and endangered plants and animals. Many of these plants are threatened by foot traffic. The problem can be alleviated by the simple practice of staying on the trail. There are several especially sensitive areas, including the Tanawha Trail around Grandfather Mountain, the Craggy Pinnacle Trail at Craggy Gardens, and at Devil's Courthouse. Whether you suspect the presence of rare plants or not, please stay on the trail – if for no other reason than to protect all plants and to prevent erosion.
- Rabies can be transmitted by most wild animals. Animals in the park should not be treated as pets or lured close enough to feed or touch. If a squirrel, chipmunk, or other animal comes close without your encouragement, it could be a sign of serious illness, please tell a ranger.
- All plants on the Parkway are protected. Many of our native wildflowers in the Blue Ridge are threatened by illegal harvesting. The large, round, shiny evergreen leaves of Galax have been gathered commercially in the southern Appalachian mountains for generations for decorative uses in floral arrangements. Now harvested on a much larger scale, they are being shipped to flower shops around the world.





THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

There will always be discussion and uncertainties with something as big and complex as our planet's climate. But climate change is happening and the vast majority of scientists agree that human activities are as least partially responsible. Clear trends of rising temperatures over the past two centuries coincide with the industrial revolution. These changes have consequences for all of us, and for our national parks. More intense storms, flooding, warmer streams, and more frequent droughts are among the changes that could impact all of us in the future.

What is climate change?

Many people confuse weather with climate, the difference being a measure of time. Weather is what we expect in the short-term, while climate is what we get in the long-term. Climate change can be defined as long-term, significant changes in the weather patterns of an area involving temperature, precipitation or wind.

How will it affect the region?

As one of the most biologically diverse regions on earth, the southern Appalachians are especially at risk from climate change. Although all species

are somewhat adaptable, their flexibility of adaptation varies and those with the smallest geographic range are the most at-risk. Reduced biodiversity of the region is almost certain with changes in climate.

Amphibian and reptile populations are especially sensitive to changes in air and water temperatures. Populations of birds are associated with various climatic variables, especially temperature. Cold water fish are especially vulnerable to the rise in water temperatures, so the native brook trout is susceptible.

What can we do?

"Thinking globally and acting locally" is not just a good bumper sticker or slogan – it is a good policy and choices made now may help avoid catastrophic impacts in the future. Many people are already beginning to make choices in their personal lives that will have long-term positive effects.

These may include recycling, carpooling, or walking or biking short trips. When visiting the Parkway, stay on trails to help keep ecosystems healthy.



OTHER COMMON FLOWERS

- Birdfoot Violet** - (*Viola pedata*) 4-10 inches tall, bluish-purple flower. March — June
- Columbine** - (*Aquilegia canadensis*) about 2 feet tall, nodding red and yellow flower. June — July
- Sun Drops** - (*Oenothera fruticosa*) 1-2 feet tall, yellow 4-petal flower. June — July
- Evening Primrose** - (*Oenothera biennis*) 3-5 feet tall, yellow 4-petal flower. June — July
- Phlox** - (*Phlox* species) 2-6 feet tall, magenta-pink flowers. July — October
- Touch-me-not** - (*Impatiens* species) 3-6 feet tall, nodding yellow or orange flower. July — August
- Tall Bellflower** - (*Campanula americana*) 2-6 feet tall, blue, 5-petal flower. July — August
- White Snakeroot** - (*Eupatorium rugosum*) 3-5 feet tall, bright white flower heads. July — Sept

Showy Blooms

A Quick Guide to some flowers & shrubs on the Parkway

Shrubs



**Catwba Rhododendron**  
(*Rhododendron catawbiense*): A medium shrub with pink to purple flowers growing above 3000 feet on exposed ridges. **June — Early July**



**Rosebay Rhododendron**  
(*Rhododendron maximum*): also called White Rhododendron: A large shrub with white to pink flowers, over a wide range of elevations. **June — July**



**Flame Azalea**  
(*Rhododendron calendulaceum*): A medium shrub with bright orange to red flowers. Azaleas are in the rhododendron family. **June — July**



**Wild Hydrangea**  
(*Hydrangea arborescens*): A medium shrub with large clusters of white flowers. **May — August**



**Mountain Laurel**  
(*Kalmia latifolia*): A medium shrub with pink flowers. **June — July**



**Pinxter Flower**  
(*Rhododendron nudiflorum*): A medium shrub with pink honeysuckle-like flowers, common at lower elevations. **April — May**

Flowers



**Fire Pink**  
(*Silene virginica*): This 6-20 inch plant has bright red flowers up to 1-1/2 inches wide. **April — June**



**Goat's Beard**  
(*Aruncus dioicus*): 3-5 feet tall with flower plumes 3-5 inches wide and 6-10 inches long. **May — June**



**Bluets**  
(*Houstonia* species): 3-6 inches tall with many small 4-petal flowers, light to dark blue. Bluets sometimes grow in large beds. **May-August**



**Turks-Cap Lily**  
(*Lilium superbum*): 6 to 10 feet tall with flowers 2-4 inches wide with a green star at center. The Carolina Lily (*L. michauxii*) is similar but lacks the green star and bears fewer flowers. **July-August**



**Large-Flowered Trillium**  
(*Trillium grandiflorum*): The largest of several trilliums found along the parkway, grows to about 15 inches. Trilliums have 3 leaves and a single 3-petal flower. **April — May**



**Bee Balm**  
(*Monarda didyma*), also called Oswego Tea: 2-5 feet tall with bright red 2-inch flowers. Wild Bergamot is similar but pink. **July — August**

For a complete list of blooms, log onto: <http://www.nps.gov/blri/planyourvisit/brochures.htm>.

- Dense Blazing Star** - (*Liatris spicata*) 2-4 feet tall, rose-purple flowered spike. **August — Sept**
- Goldenrod** - (*Solidago* species) about 3 feet tall, golden-yellow spikes or plumes. **August — Sept**
- Ox Eye Daisy** - (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*) 1-3 feet tall; white petals, yellow center.
- Black-Eyed Susan** - (*Rudbeckia hirta*) 3-6 feet tall, yellow petals, black center.
- Tall Coneflower** - (*Rudbeckia laciniata*) 2-3 feet tall, drooping yellow petals, green center.
- Coreopsis** - (*Coreopsis major*) 2-3 feet tall, golden-yellow petals, green center.
- Jerusalem Artichoke** - (*Helianthus tuberosus*) 5-10 feet tall, yellow petals, yellow center.
- Aster** - (*Aster* species) 2-5 feet tall; many small flowers; blue, purple, or white petals.



Mount Mitchell State Park, NC

Mount Mitchell is the highest point in eastern North America, rising to 6,684 feet. A Mount Mitchell State Park map with trail information is available at the state park headquarters, two miles up NC State Highway 128 from the park entrance at Milepost 355.4. Write to Mount Mitchell State Park, 2388 State Hwy 128, Burnsville, NC 28714 or call (828) 675 4611. [www.ncparks.gov](http://www.ncparks.gov)



Appalachian Trail, VA

The Appalachian Trail parallels the first 100 miles of the Blue Ridge Parkway to a point just north of Roanoke VA. There are many trail access points along this section of the Parkway. For more information, please refer to Appalachian Trail publications. [www.nps.gov/appa](http://www.nps.gov/appa)

Popular Hiking Trails of the Blue Ridge Parkway

Hiking maps are available at Visitor Center closest to the trail or can be downloaded at [www.nps.gov/blri](http://www.nps.gov/blri)

Virginia Trails

Milepost	Trail	Miles	Difficulty
5.9	Farm Museum Trail	0.25	easy *
34.4	Yankee Horse (logging RR)	0.2	moderate
60.8	Otter Creek	3.5	moderate *
63.1	Otter Lake Loop	0.8	moderate *
63.6	James River (canal locks)	0.2	easy *
63.6	Trail of Trees Loop	0.5	moderate *
78.4	Apple Orchard Falls	1.2	strenuous **
83.1	Fallingwater Cascades	1.6	moderate **
83.5	Flat Top	4.4	strenuous *
85.7	Abbott Lake Loop	1.0	easy *
85.9	Elk Run Loop	0.8	easy *
85.9	Johnson Farm Loop	2.1	moderate *
85.9	Harkening Hill	3.3	moderate *
86.0	Sharp Top	1.6	strenuous *
110.6	Stewart Knob	1.2	moderate *
114.9	Roanoke River Loop	0.35	easy *
120.4	Roanoke Mountain Summit	0.11	moderate *
154.5	Smart View Loop	2.6	moderate
167.1	Rock Castle Gorge Loop	10.8	strenuous *
176.2	Mabry Mill	0.5	easy
213.0	Fisher's Peak Loop	2.25	moderate *

North Carolina Trails

Milepost	Trail	Miles	Difficulty
217.5	Cumberland Knob	0.5	easy *
230.1	Little Glade Millpond Loop	0.4	easy
241.0	Fodder Stack	1.0	moderate *
271.9	Cascades Loop	0.5	moderate
294.0	Flat Top Mountain	3.0	moderate *
294.1	Figure 8 Loop	0.7	easy *
296.5	Boone Fork Loop	5.5	moderate-strenuous *
297.0	Price Lake Loop	2.7	moderate *
304.4	Linn Cove Viaduct Access	0.16	easy *
305.2	Beacon Heights	0.2	moderate *
305.5	Tanawha (MP 297 - 305)	13.5	moderate-strenuous * D
316.4	Linville Falls, Erwins View	0.8	moderate *
316.4	Linville Falls, Plunge Basin	0.5	strenuous *
339.5	Crabtree Falls	2.5	strenuous *
364.2	Craggy Pinnacle	0.7	moderate *
407.6	Mt. Pisgah Summit	1.3	moderate-strenuous *
407.6	Buck Springs (lodge to view)	1.06	easy-moderate *
408.5	Frying Pan Mountain	1.06	moderate-strenuous *
418.8	Graveyard Fields Stream Loop	2.3	moderate
431.0	Richland Balsam	1.5	moderate
451.2	Waterrock Knob Summit	0.6	moderate-strenuous

Please note:  
Distances are one way except for loop trails. See trail maps for distances, features, walking conditions and important advice. \* Hiking map is available. \*\* Designated National Recreation Trail. D=Tanawha has nine Parkway access points, several in the Grandfather Mountain area.

Finding The Best Of The Fall Colors



Fall is the season when the Blue Ridge attracts the most attention. Travelers, nature writers, photographers, and artists come to enjoy the visual display created by hardwood leaves changing from summer green to autumn gold, red, and orange. Visiting here in the peak of the fall color season is a sight that few fail to appreciate. Finding the right "window" of time and the perfect spot can perhaps be nothing more than good fortune, but keeping a few things in mind and exercising some patience can increase anyone's chances of seeing the Blue Ridge in its autumn glory.

Typically, the Parkway experiences the much anticipated change in fall foliage around the middle of October. Some years the color comes a bit early and other years it may be delayed a week or so. Many factors contribute to variations in when and where colors will peak, with moisture throughout the year and the colder temperatures being key factors.

The Parkway is 469 miles north to south and varies over 5,000 feet in elevation. The best plan for witnessing fall color is to drive some distance on the Parkway, changing elevations and north-south orientation. As is always the case with outdoor viewing, early morning or late afternoon light tends to bring contrasts of shadows that will brighten colors.

Whether you come to the Blue Ridge with camera, palette and brush, or simply to take in the richness from an overlook, a little planning and patience in mid to late October will yield some of the pretty color that we're famous for.

North Carolina's Mountains-to-Sea Trail

The Mountains to Sea Trail (MST), when complete, will extend over 930 miles from Clingman's Dome, in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, to Jockey's Ridge on the North Carolina Outer Banks. Much of the MST parallels the Blue Ridge Parkway with many trail access points along the Parkway. The Carolina Mountain Club maintains much of the trail between mileposts 355 and 455. To volunteer, contact:

Carolina Mountain Club  
PO Box 68  
Asheville, NC • 28802  
[www.carolinamtnclub.com](http://www.carolinamtnclub.com)



# More than Just a Road

## PROTECTING PARKWAY VIEWSHEDS

### AT ISSUE



How can you help?

Contact the Western Virginia Land Trust [www.westernvirginiatrust.org](http://www.westernvirginiatrust.org), the Conservation Trust for North Carolina [www.ctnc.org](http://www.ctnc.org), or Blue Ridge Forever [www.blueridgeforever.info](http://www.blueridgeforever.info) to be a part of the viewshed protection programs. These groups serve a vital mission in preserving open space in local communities as well.



N&W Overlook at Milepost 106.9. Top View 1950, Bottom View: 2005

The Parkway's most identifiable and notable feature becomes apparent as we unfold the map. It is long and narrow! This shape affects management of the park and the visitors' experience as well. Along the majority of the Parkway, the boundary remains close at hand, and the long, sweeping views that we enjoy from the ridgetops extend all the way to the horizon. Scores of adjacent communities identify themselves with the Parkway and work hard to preserve the views that our visitors enjoy.

During construction of the Parkway, local residents referred to the overlooks as "balconies" and the Parkway remains today as something of a platform or a balcony for many visitors. People enjoy climbing up high and looking out into valleys and across distant mountain ranges, and into rural landscapes and local communities.

The vistas that the Parkway is known for go far beyond the physical boundary. This notion of the horizon being the park boundary created a sense of wilderness in the designers' minds. In essence, they felt that it provided "freedom from the impression of a boundary line."

This idea, the horizon as the boundary, also creates unique challenges today for those who manage the Parkway, since the park was designed to take full advantage of these scenic views. Decisions made outside the park boundary in the communities along the way affect the visitors' experience and, in a similar way, every decision made by Parkway management is done with the understanding that this can affect the neighboring communities. Through the 29 North Carolina and Virginia counties that the Parkway travels, a half-million acres of scenic views lie within a two-mile wide corridor. Two-thirds of the 1200 mountainside and rural farm landscapes we see are owned by private landowners and the other one-third are on national forest lands.

Four thousand adjacent park landowners have some reserved rights on park lands. Most have private road access and some have rights-of-way for utilities. All of these deeded rights and accesses are managed

by park staff. Almost 500 agricultural leases or scenic easements are a significant tool for managing Parkway views. Another 500 permitted utility rights-of-way, 450 agricultural leases, and some 21,000 acres of scenic easements are managed by the park. Parkway visitors spend over 2 billion dollars annually in communities adjacent to the Parkway - communities that are helping us celebrate this year. Those visitors surveyed indicate that the primary reasons they come here are for recreation and for viewing scenery. A 2002-2003 visitor survey found that 25% of visitor respondents said they would change where they visit the Parkway if scenic quality declined. Others said they would completely stop visiting affected sections of the Parkway. Such surveys suggest a direct relationship between changing land uses and reduced revenues in counties where the scenic quality of views is diminished.

Land-use changes in the 29 counties along the Parkway are dramatically altering the scenic quality as viewed from some 1,242 Parkway roadside and overlook vistas. Limited staff allows for addressing only the most drastic land-use changes on a case-by-case basis. In 28 of the 29 counties, there is no regular or routine contact to monitor activities or development on adjacent lands. In addition to viewshed changes caused by human development along the parkway there are also natural resource issues that are impacting the views. Much of the parkway above 4500' is home to the endangered Carolina Northern Flying Squirrel and park managers are modifying how they treat some vistas in these areas to minimize impacts to the squirrels. Rather than the entire vista being clear-cut as occurs with typical vistas, in these areas some widely-spaced spruce and birch trees will be left standing to provide habitat while still allowing visitors to see distant scenery.

Additionally air pollution over the last 60 years has resulted in decreased viewing opportunities for parkway visitors with visibility in the Southern Appalachians decreasing 40% in the winter and 80% in the summer months. Not only does this affect how far a visitor can see but it also reduces the quality of what is seen, with views appearing washed out and many landscape features being obscured and no longer visible.

The Parkway may look simple on a map - a long, thin, blue line meandering down the mountains between Shenandoah and the Smokies. But keeping the magnificent views to the horizon as they were intended in the early days is a challenge that will continue for years to come.

# More than Just a Road

## BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

### AT ISSUE



What Can You Do?

Stay on the trail to avoid trampling fragile habitats. While tempting, don't share your lunch with the wildlife and dispose of food waste and food wrappers responsibly.



Grassy Bald at Craggy Gardens

### Plant Species

1600 vascular plants  
137 trees  
(more than all of Europe)

### Animal Species

74 mammals  
115 nesting birds  
40+ amphibians  
35 reptiles

Ridge Parkway offers an exceptional glimpse of the regional flora and fauna. It is world renowned for its biological diversity.

The Parkway covers a wide range of habitats along the Appalachian Mountains, so that the plants growing on a mountain summit at the northern end of the park may be quite different from those on a summit at the southern end. Some of these habitats are exceptionally rare. Rock outcrops at high elevations contain a fragile group of alpine species that were pushed southward during glacial times and eventually were left stranded on the southern mountains. Another unique habitat is the Grassy Balds, likely grazed by native animals such as bison and elk, but which now are maintained by park biologists.

Over 100 wetlands and high elevation bogs which are significant and globally rare ecological communities in the Southern Appalachians occur on lands administered by the Blue Ridge Parkway. In North Carolina alone, nearly 90% of the bog and fen habitats have been lost in the Southern Appalachian region and the Parkway contains many of the last remaining intact wetlands. These wetlands provide habitat for over 25 species of rare plants and animals, such as the federally listed Southern Appalachian Bog Turtle, Swamp Pink and Gray's Lily.

Along this route, visitors encounter an unsurpassed diversity of climate zones, vegetation zones, physiographic zones, and geological features. Within park boundaries are 600 streams (150 headwaters), 47 Natural Heritage Areas (areas set aside as national, regional, or state examples of



exemplary natural communities), a variety of slopes and exposures, and possibly 100 different soil types. With an elevation range of 5,700 feet, the Parkway provides a home for both southern species at the lower elevations and northern species on the mountaintops. Seventy five distinct

Mountain laurel and flame azalea

plant communities have been documented, including 24 considered globally rare or threatened.

The Parkway's tremendous diversity is also due to its large north-south geographic range, diverse geology, a variety of micro-habitats, and varying climates. Taking advantage of this diversity are 14 major vegetation types and about 1,600 vascular plant species, 50 of which are threatened or endangered. Nearly 100 species of trees grow along the Parkway, about as many as are found in all of Europe. Added to that are estimates of almost 400 species of mosses and nearly 2,000 species of fungi.

Because of this wide range in elevation, the park visitor can enjoy a tremendous variety of wildflowers throughout the spring, summer, and fall months. While the summer wildflowers are blooming in the valleys, the spectacular spring wildflowers are just beginning to bloom on the high peaks. The same environmental variability that leads to such spectacular bloom displays in the spring and summer also contributes to autumn leaf color. The first leaves to change are those of deciduous trees on the highest elevations, which change to vivid shades of orange, red, yellow, and purple. Throughout the month of October the leaf color changes gradually, beginning in the high mountains and concluding at the lower slopes and valleys.

Not to be outdone by the plants, many species of animals make their homes along the Parkway. Seventy four different mammals including the federally endangered northern flying squirrel make their home along the Blue Ridge Parkway. More than 43 species of amphibians (including 33 species of salamanders) have been documented thus far along the Blue Ridge Parkway—the highest number of amphibian species of any National Park Service unit! Further the Parkway plays host to 35 species of reptiles! One hundred fifty-nine species of birds are known to nest here with dozens of others passing through during fall and spring migrations. A Parkway visit may seem incomplete without the glimpses of white tailed deer, wild turkey, and perhaps a chance to see the elusive black bear.

It may be thought of by many as just a road, a ride-awhile and stop-awhile winding, recreational trip linking Shenandoah and the Great Smokies. Along the way, however, the Parkway opens up the southern and central Appalachian Mountains and its wealth of plants and animals. This is, without a doubt, one of the most diverse places on earth.



Chickadee



# More than Just a Road

## PLANT POACHING

AT ISSUE



Galax leaves visibly tagged to prevent illegal harvesting

The study of botany and its medicinal derivatives was a standard part of the training for physicians and pharmacists a century ago. It is little wonder that in our modern culture, herbal remedies have become popular for the treatment of many ailments ranging from the common cold to cancer.

The Blue Ridge Parkway, located in central and southern Appalachia, is world renowned for its biological diversity. As such a botanical cornucopia, the Parkway has become the focus of a growing problem with the illegal harvesting of plants (or “poaching”) that support the \$200 billion global natural products industry.

Traditional use of many plants in the forest is part of the culture of the mountains, dating back to Native American populations before European settlement. Families gathered plants for personal consumption, as traditional herbal remedies, and as cash crops. In the mid-1600’s, sassafras was second only to tobacco as an important export to Europe, where it was used extensively as a medicinal. For the past several generations, however, these traditional and family-oriented activities have steadily declined in the region. Harvesting of plants today often involves organized violators who are “employed” as part of criminal conspiracies to supply legal markets with medicinal plants. They do not practice the sustainable harvest that traditional gatherers did and tens of thousands of plants or leaves taken from Parkway lands have been confiscated from harvesters on a number of occasions.

Poaching of plants has a direct impact on biological communities, the potential for research, and on the visitors’ enjoyment. In the wild, plants often grow in isolated patches that can be easily devastated by poachers. When a population is reduced to only a few individual plants or colonies, the genetic diversity is reduced. In addition, a species that has been heavily poached is at risk in its ability to survive disease. Poaching activity

Throughout recorded human history, plants have been valued for their medicinal qualities. Today, about one quarter of all medicines come from derivatives or synthetic variations of plant compounds.

has been documented for decades, but recent investigation shows an increase in exploitation and a subsequent decrease in plant populations. Current levels of poaching could lead to complete loss of some plant species.

Three of the most often poached species in the park are galax, black cohosh, and ginseng. Recently the Parkway initiated a program of tagging such targeted plant species so that they can be easily traced back to their origin on park lands. The purpose of the program is to prevent the removal of illegally harvested plants so that rangers can spend more time on other visitor and resource protection activities. This tagging, through means visible and/or concealed, along with federal courts giving active jail time to offenders is leading to a decrease in plant poaching activities. Visitors witnessing illegal activities are asked to not confront the offenders but report the activity to the rangers through 1-800-PARKWATCH (1-800-727-5928)

The tremendous biological diversity of the forests along the Blue Ridge Parkway offers a wide variety of tempting other products as well. Edible plants such as ramps (gathered in large quantities to support the now popular ramp festivals) and mushrooms, plants with value as nursery products, and special woods prized for carving or in the making of musical instruments are all taken illegally from park lands. Although limited quantities of berries, fruits, and nuts may be gathered for personal consumption within the park (such gathering does not destroy the plant or hinder its reproduction), the role of the National Park Service is to protect the natural and historic objects of the park so that they will be available for the enjoyment of future generations. The growing amount of illegal harvesting on park lands is an issue that increasingly threatens the success of this role and robs future generations.



Ramps

### How can you help?

Visitors witnessing illegal activities are asked to not confront the offenders but instead, report the activity to the rangers through 1-800-PARKWATCH (1-800-727-5928)



Ginseng

# More than Just a Road

## NON-NATIVE SPECIES

AT ISSUE

As visitors enjoy the Parkway, most of the plants and animals they see – are native to the Appalachians and Blue Ridge. But the Parkway also faces issues, as do all National Parks, of many non-native species that threaten native vegetation. But here on the Blue Ridge Parkway, one of the most ecologically diverse areas in world, the problem is magnified by its length and shape of the park. Resource managers and other park staff must work extra hard to keep the natural and native plants and animals of the Blue Ridge thriving.

The introduction of such non-native species is usually unintentional and is often the results of travel, immigration, or even global commerce. The wood used in packing crates has been the source of introduction of exotic insects. Produce, seeds, or nursery stock have been the culprits for introducing exotics as well. Automobiles and bicycles can carry exotics as can camping equipment or hiking boots.

Once established in a new area, the species can spread with devastating results. Some exotics even thrive or become invasive in their new habitat since the competition or natural enemies that once kept them in check are now absent. Without these controls, adaptation to the new region can lead to unmanageable levels.

Preserving natural resources along a 469-mile ribbon of land with 1,200 miles of boundary further complicates the issue of controlling or stopping invasive species. Because of its linear character, the Blue Ridge Parkway is more susceptible than most parks to invasion by non-native plants and animals from adjacent lands.

“Disturbance” areas or habitats tend to enhance the growth of invasive species. The Blue Ridge Parkway has thousands of “cut and fill” slopes, more than 3,000 vista openings and more than 1,000 utility and roadway crossings, all of which offer opportunities for invasive plant species to grow. Control of this problem is a long-term commitment since non-natives are prolific seed producers and often become well established in an area within one or two years.

Several non-native animals can also pose problems to the native species of the southern mountains. Eastern bluebird populations dropped significantly as the more aggressive European starlings took over available nesting cavities. Introduced brown and rainbow trout have displaced the native brook trout from many streams, forcing the native trout to move further and further upstream. The list of nonnative species extends down to invertebrates, including earthworms and crayfish, and even fungi.

The Blue Ridge Parkway is set aside, as are all national park areas, to conserve scenery, wildlife, and the natural and historic objects within the park. One of the most serious threats to preservation of the natural resources is the invasion of non-native or exotic species. Invasive plants (princess tree, honeysuckle and kudzu), invasive insects (gypsy moth and hemlock wooly adelgid), or invasive pathogens (chestnut blight or dogwood anthracnose) have become established in the Appalachian region and affect the health of individual species, regional watersheds, and the overall diversity of the forest. Success in controlling these species is determined by the participation of all landowners in the region.



Gypsy Moth Caterpillar

Treating invasive princess tree along Parkway roadcut

### How can you help?

Park visitors, especially those who live near the park, can help by planting native species in their backyards, washing their boots and car tires after trekking through areas where exotic seeds are being dispersed, and insuring that grass seeds and bulk soils purchased are weed-free. New exotics, both plants and animals, continually make their way across the United States. If you see a new non-native species, please report it and its location to park staff